

Transition Material for A Level Politics (Linear from September 2017)

Exam board: Edexcel



Introduction

It is great that you are considering studying Politics at A Level.

This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start an A Level in Politics in September. It is aimed to be used over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September.

In preparation for your course, it is vital that you begin reading a newspaper every day. The department recommends the 'I' or the Times.

An A Level in Politics can lead to many different pathways including:

- A degree in Politics or a related subject such as International Relations
- Law
- Lecturing
- Becoming an M.P
- Working in Parliament
- Working for your local council
- Political Journalism
- T.V / Radio
- Finance and Banking
- Management Training
- Teaching
- P.R
- Advertising
- Media
- Local Politics
- Charity organisations such as the UN or NGO's
- Diplomatic Services

Politics suits students who have an interest in the world and how it is run. A good Politics student will be able to articulate their arguments clearly and will recognise that their viewpoint is not the only one. You also need to have good writing skills; Politics is an essay based subject.

Edexcel Politics specification and exam structure

Politics is a new linear course. There are 3 units which make up the A –Level;

Unit 1: UK Politics (worth 33%) (Exam length: 2 hours)

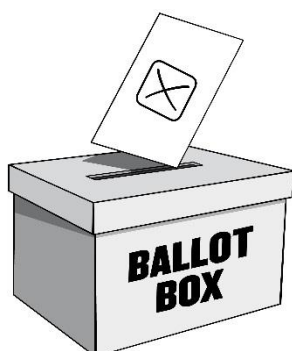
This unit examines in detail how people and politics interact. You will explore the emergence and development of the UK’s democratic system and the similarities, differences, connections and parallels between direct and indirect democracy. You will learn about the role and scope of political parties that are so central to contemporary politics, including the significance of the manifestos they publish at election time and their relevance to the mandate of the resulting government. You will also learn about the role of the media in politics.

Unit 2: UK Government (33%) (Exam length: 2 hours)

This unit is fundamental to understanding the nature of UK government, since it enables you to understand where, how and by whom political decisions are made. You will learn about the set of rules governing politics in the UK, the UK constitution, which is different in nature from most of the rest of the world. You will also study the specific roles and powers of the different major branches of the government – legislative, executive, and judiciary – as well as the relationships and balance of power between them, and decide where sovereignty (power) now lies within this system.

Unit 3: Comparative Politics – American Politics (33%) (Exam length: 2 hours)

You will begin by studying the US Constitution and the arguments surrounding this guiding document of US democracy. In learning about the key institutions of government in the USA and analysing the manner in which they achieve this power and exercise it over their citizens, you will judge ultimately whether ‘liberty and justice for all’ has been achieved in the USA. You will compare and contrast politics and institutions in the US with those in the UK.



Book Recommendations:

As is the nature of Politics, books can become out of date very quickly, so if you want to buy any books off the internet etc., check with Ms Beale first that they are the most up to date edition and that they cover our course.

The current course began in September 2017 so any specific Edexcel textbooks should have been published after that date.

As mentioned before, read a good quality newspaper every day

For Units 1 and 2:

- Andrew Heywood; Essentials of UK Politics, A level (4th edition)
- Wyn Grant; Pressure Groups and British Politics (Contemporary political studies)
- The Oxford Very Short Introduction Guides e.g to Politics, Conservatism, Liberalism

For Unit 3:

- Bennett, *US Government & Politics (4th Edition)*
- McKeever & Davies, *Politics USA (3rd Edition)*
- Duncan Watts, *Understanding: US/UK Government & Politics, a Comparative Guide (2nd Edition)*
- McKay, *American Politics and Society (8th Edition)*
- Singh, *Governing America: The Politics of a Divided Democracy*
- Wasserman, *The Basics of American Politics (14th Edition)*

TV Recommendations:

- BBC 6 o'clock or 10 o'clock news
- Channel 4 news
- Question Time (BBC)
- Daily Politics Show (BBC)
- Newsnight (BBC)
- Have I Got News For You (BBC)
- Mock The Week (BBC)



Research activities for Independent learning (*A*/A in italics*)

- Research Labour and Conservative policy in the following areas (create a comparison table)

- European Union
- Voting age
- Scotland
- *Constitutional reform*
- *Education*
- *The Economy*



- Create a table showing the election results from 2017. Ensure you include:

- Number of seats for each party
- Percentage of the vote & seats each party received
- *Statistics for the number of female / ethnic minority / non-university / non- Oxbridge / went to state school*



- Research and define the following key terms: *Get examples to support (make sure they are UK based and related to the constitution)*

- Constitution
- Codified
- Uncodified
- Entrench
- Judicial review
- Unitary constitution
- Federal constitution



- Create an A3 information sheet, with facts and images, of the following British Prime Ministers: *Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown* and David Cameron.

- Find at least 5 newspaper articles about British Politics – create 5 bullet points which summarise each article and *annotate to identify the bias in each article.*



Required Knowledge and Skills – you must complete this work for September

- 1) Draw a timeline showing the main events in British Politics since 1997 – you need to include the British Prime Ministers, key events such as 7/7 terror attack, referendums, date & result (including turnout) of elections
- 2) Create a summary of the 2017 manifestos of the 3 main parties (Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem). Include their policy on welfare, economy, foreign policy and law and order.
- 3) Create a diagram showing how laws are passed. Include an example of a recent law.
- 4) Create a diagram showing how Parliament works.
- 5) What is the role of the British Prime Minister? Briefly explain.
- 6) What is the role of the Queen in British politics? Briefly explain.
- 7) Research your local MP and create a fact file on them – include when they became an MP, their majority, their party and what they have done to improve their constituency

Autumn EMB1: To be submitted in your first Politics lesson in September

Essay question (must be at least 2 sides of A4)

‘The monarchy should be abolished. Discuss.’

